

Rockville Environment Commission

Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, April 14, 2009

At the Glenview Mansion, 603 Edmonston Drive

Attendance

Commissioners: Faith Klareich, David Davis, Christine Davidson-McCord, Beri Kravitz, Dominique Lorang-Leins and Tolu Odunlami.

Absent: Kris Dighe.

Guests: Nate Wall, City of Rockville; Jason Yu, City of Rockville; Julie Farrell, City of Rockville.

Meeting Commencement

The meeting was convened at 7:37 pm at the Glenview Mansion.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 10, 2009 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved (motion by Davis, second by Odunlami).

Environmental Management Report by Nate Wall

New City Staff Hires

The Environmental Management Division has recently hired Steve Davis, previously a commercial codes inspector, as the City's new environmental inspector to inspect stormwater management facilities and be available for spill response and stream pollution issues. Heather Gewandter has been selected as the City's new stormwater manager, and has been conducting interviews to backfill for her environmental specialist position. Amanda Rockler has left the watershed specialist position for a position with Maryland SeaGrant; that position has now been filled by Audra Lew.

Stream Cleanup Efforts

Jason Yu provided the results of the 5 stream cleanups held on April 4th as part of the Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup event, organize each year by the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

Rainscapes rain barrel workshops

The first of two rain barrel workshops was held last month. 50 people were registered, over 70 attended. There will be another workshop in Rockville on April 18th. This workshop is full, with a waiting list. So far, the Rainscapes program has processed 10 rebates, and expect many more in the near future.

All American City Finalist

Rockville has been named as one of 32 finalists for the All American City designation this year. Rockville has been named an All American City four times

previously: 1954, 1961, 1976 and 1978; the City was a finalist in 1990. Awardees are to be determined in mid-June.

Historic Commission Joint Meeting

Mark Charles is coordinating with HDC staff to schedule a joint meeting with the Environment Commission to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Photo Contest by Jason Yu

Jason Yu, accompanied by Julie Farrell, presented the entries in Rockville's First Annual Environmental Photo Contest for judging by the Commission. Twenty-seven (27) photos were submitted across three age categories – Adult (18+), Teen (13-17) and 12&Under.

The Commission was very pleased with the quality of all submissions, and had a difficult time selecting the award winners; honorable mentions were also selected from each category. Jason Yu will tabulate the votes and inform the Commission of the standings.

Green Building Ordinance Discussion by Nate Wall

Nate Wall briefed the Commission on the updates to Chapter 5 of the City Code – Buildings and Building Regulations. This comprehensive overhaul of all of the building codes will be released for public comment starting May 1st. While several aspects of the building code have been made “greener”, of particular interest to the Commission is a new article 14, titled “Green Building Regulations”. This article provides additional requirements beyond the standard building code for certain types and sizes of buildings.

Wall then went through Article 14 to highlight the major new requirements being proposed for new construction of commercial, multi-unit residential and low-rise residential structures. Questions arose about the applicability to renovations and additions; also, should make air quality a priority in retrofits where the building envelope is being tightened up to prevent “sick buildings”. Additional comments concerned certification requirements for building / energy raters and installers, and whether there were any liability issues with the requirements.

Commissioners will be given a full briefing of the proposed Chapter 5 amendments at the next meeting in May. In the meantime, Commissioners can review Article 14 and contact Wall with any additional questions / comments.

Science Day by Faith Klareich

Klareich went over the schedule for who would be available to work the EC's booth at Science Day. Wall provided the “Kill-A-Watt” meters, the lamps for CFL vs incandescent comparison, an EC working group signup sheet, the CFL poster, and a rain barrel demonstration; Davis will be providing seed packets and printouts on CFLs; Klareich is bringing the glow beads; Lorang-Leins will be bringing a solar house demo; Kravitz is supplying a copy of her home energy audit and some handouts (to be printed out by Wall). Davidson-McCord has volunteered to pick up the supplies from the City and bring them to Science Day.

Working Group Updates

The working group updates were tabled until next month.

Old Business

Following the backyard habitat at last month's EC meeting by Anne Goodman, Nate Wall asked if the Commission was comfortable with endorsing that program, as described. Davis moved to wholeheartedly endorse the backyard habitats program, with Davidson-McCord seconding. Issue passed by unanimous vote.

New Business

Davis presented the "National Call to Action on Global Warming" to the Commission. He explained that this was a policy tool to work with Maryland lawmakers for enacting climate change regulations. This item will be on the agenda for the May meeting for endorsement.

Adjournment

The Commission meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 pm.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 14, 2009** at **7:30** pm at the **City Hall** (111 Maryland Ave). Note – this meeting has been rescheduled from the usual Tuesday date to accommodate Commissioner schedules.

Post-Meeting Action Items:

- Jason Yu will tabulate results of Photo Contest voting to determine results.
- Nate Wall will send out an email to Commissioners with a link to download the entire Chapter 5 city code revisions, along with a digital version of the green building code.
- Nate Wall to provide additional materials for the Science Day booth. Commissioners to supply power strip and extension cord.